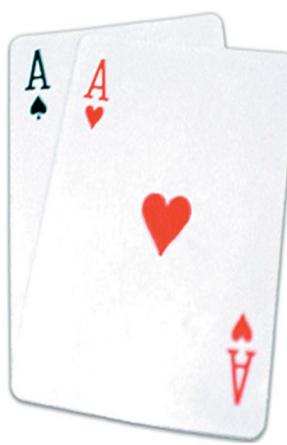


SNAP!

OUT OF IT AND INTO TROUBLE!

www.snap.enzyme.org.nz

Free! · October 14, 2004 · Issue Eight



FBI free speech ram-raid

THE FBI seized computers holding websites for the independent news source Indymedia last Thursday. The seizure took out over twenty web sites reporting news on four different continents and resulted in an estimated loss of a million items of content including articles and photos. Indymedia is a global network of independent news collectives, and uses an open publishing model, which means any individual can post news and photos.

Last Thursday Rackspace, a London internet company which owns computers hosting Indymedia sites, received a subpoena to turn those computers over to the FBI. Law enforcement agencies from at least four countries (Italy, Switzerland, UK and USA) were involved in this attempt to suppress dissent. Either the seizure of the servers was illegal or was done with the complicity of the UK Home Secretary.

Initially the only reason given



Emil und Viktor pose for a picture – the photo that sparked the FBI raid

was to remove photos allegedly of Swiss undercover agents on the Nantes Indymedia site. Although the FBI agents freely admitted to Rackspace "individuals have a right to take photographs of agents in public places and post those photos on the internet."

Further to this ridiculous assertion Daniel Zapelli, senior federal prosecutor for Geneva

(Switzerland), confirmed he has opened a criminal investigation into Indymedia coverage of the 2003 G8 Summit in Evian, France. And Federal prosecutor of Bologna (Italy) Marina Pazzini came out of the woodwork to say she is investigating Italy Indymedia because it may "support terrorism."

This last assertion is supposed to justify the international raid. But it does not provide any clue to how a series of web sites that are completely open to the public could possibly support terrorism.

Meanwhile international journalist associations have come forward in support of Indymedia. "We have witnessed an intolerable and intrusive international police operation against a network specialising in independent journalism," said Aidan White, International Federation of Journalists General Secretary.

• **Indymedia website:** www.indymedia.org.nz

Vox Pops!

1. What do you think about the fact that there is a NZ weapons industry?
2. What do you think about the weapons industry holding a conference at Te Papa?
3. Should all weapons be put in museums?

Betty

1. I don't think much of it at all!
2. I don't have enough details, but if people are opposed to it, then they should be able to attend.
3. Who wants to look at weapons?



James

1. It's not too good mate.
2. They shouldn't be allowed to.
3. Yeah, I reckon.

Malisha

1. It sucks.
2. Nah, that's no good.
3. Yes, so people can look at them.



Air strike to hit NZ cities

A STRIKE by Auckland and Christchurch ground staff is scheduled to start at 2am Friday after Air New Zealand management rejected union attempts to negotiate a new agreement. Service and Food Workers Union advocate Alastair Duncan says the talks failed to get off the ground when the company took a "take it or leave approach" to the mediation.

Mr Duncan says the company would not explain why it had waited for 14 days before attending mediation nor would they explain why they had not responded to union attempts to discuss the issue at an earlier date. The company rejected a union request to continue the mediation on Thursday then refused to commit to further talks next week.

The strike is in response to a low pay offer (despite huge profits), removal of overtime and attempts to split the workers' contract into four separate agreements.

"Bypass" houses trashed

TRANSIT New Zealand's neglect of houses in the path of the proposed Te Aro bypass is resulting in a free-for-all ransacking of historic buildings.

Dozens of houses sitting in the path of the bypass have been recently vacated by tenants and many of these buildings have been left wide open to people breaking in to steal fittings, woodwork and other materials.

Since the vacating of the Catacombs drop-in centre on Willis Street there have been at least three interrupted looting sprees. On Sunday a man was disturbed stealing two ornate rimu doors. On Monday two people were arrested attempting to remove materials from 280 Willis Street.

The local residents, who are rallying together to help protect these buildings, are disgusted at Transit's refusal to protect them

properly. Seasoned local heritage conservation expert Kerryn Pollock told SNAP! that Chubb have the contract to monitor all transit owned buildings.

"Buildings on historic Tonks Avenue have been monitored by Chubb for 2 years and in this time have been constantly broken into, and left wide open for days – or weeks. Obviously the same thing is happening with the Catacombs and almost certainly with all other recently vacated buildings."

Although the Historic Places Trust is concerned, they are unable to take any direct action. All they can do is apply pressure to Transit. The Transit bypass project manager says that Chubb security visits the Catacombs building three times a night.

There is an upcoming heritage tour of this area. For more details ring 04 3871146.

Comment

In the States no one can hear you scream!

A POPULAR myth, equal to the fable of Iraq's WMD's, is that Kerry's policies are substantively different to those of Bush. The facts tell us otherwise. Kerry voted for the Patriot Act, the Afghanistan war and the Iraq wars, has promised 40,000 more troops for Iraq, and to continue "the bold exercise of American power" in the Democratic Party's "tradition of muscular internationalism."

Kerry's party's track record during the Clinton years includes the removal of the main welfare safety nets, followed by a sharp increase in poverty in the US, the initiation of a multibillion-dollar missile "defence" system called Star Wars II and the approval of the biggest arms budget in history. In the same period the Clinton administration rejected biological weapons verification, a nuclear test ban treaty, an international criminal court and a ban on landmines.

Using euphemisms like "democracy-building," "humanitarian intervention," Kerry's Democrats can boast a more successful imperial record than Bush's neo-cons. In a league table of death, Clinton beat Bush hands down, having killed millions in Iraq through sanctions. Kerry looks set to score even higher.

What Kerry really objects to is not Bush's policies but his gang's outspokenness – its crude honesty – in stating its plans openly, and not from behind the usual veil of pleasant sounding liberal rhetoric. Kerry is all for the US empire but prefers those words remain unsaid. "Progressive internationalism" is far more acceptable.

Bush's policies are not just the whims of a madman, they are the logical outcome of the strategic and economic imperatives of US capitalism, and so like Bush, Kerry will do what he must to support his big business pals. Like Bush he supports the aggressive policies of US global dominance, and the worldwide wars, oppression and erosion of civil rights that this entails. So with Bush or Kerry, no matter who wins, we lose!

